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DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [NI](#) [ELECTIONS](#)

SUBJECT: OBSERVATION OF GUBERNATORIAL ELECTIONS: A REGIONAL
PERSPECTIVE

REF: A. ABUJA 716 AND PREVIOUS

[B](#). ABUJA 717

[C](#). ABUJA 731

ABUJA 00000746 001.2 OF 005

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[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY. A single characterization of the April 14 gubernatorial and state assembly elections across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones is impossible. Observations cover the full range -- from parts of Enugu and the Niger Delta regions where elections were simply never held, to some areas of the North Central and North East where the elections could be regarded as fairly credible, and the full spectrum in between. What we did observe as a trend in all areas was disorganization, lack of trained officials, poor voter lists and a lack of privacy (ref A). This cable will detail the specific problems observed by Mission and other observers in each of the geopolitical zones. END SUMMARY.

North Central Zone

[1](#)2. (SBU) Polls were generally open by approximately 1100, although some areas of Jos, Plateau state reported opening as late as 1400. In most places polling concluded by 1600. There were varying degrees of adherence to INEC guidelines on posting of voters lists, procedures for verifying registration and marking of the voters card and the individual's finger after voting. In areas of Jos where no voter list was given to polling officials, the officials were noting the names of those who voted and told observers there was an agreement with collation centers to accept these votes. Observers in Makurdi, Benue state reported tensions rising as early as 1100 as a result of insufficient materials delivered to polling stations. Mission observers in Jos noted a mob forming on the edge of town by noon on election day. In Nasarawa state, some tension was observed when voters found that at least one major candidate was not on the gubernatorial ballot.

[1](#)3. (SBU) While our own counts of votes throughout the nation were sparse, it was noted that the ANPP was performing much

better in Nasarawa, Niger, Benue and Plateau states than indicated in the INEC-announced results. We have little direct information on the switching of numbers, but another international observer commented that their group had "direct evidence" of changes in the numbers from the polling stations to the collation centers.

¶4. (SBU) INEC announced PDP victory in all six north central states. In the aftermath of the announced election results, sporadic violence has been reported in Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Benue and Plateau states.

North West Zone

¶5. (SBU) The Mission fielded observers in Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, and Sokoto States. Most polling stations opened between 0830 and 1100, though some areas of old Kano city opened as late as 1400. Local contacts report that in Malumfashi and Funtua, in Katsina state, no materials were received and no election took place. Despite the late opening of some stations, polls closed between 1530 and 1700, causing agitation among voters who had waited from early morning but could not cast their vote. INEC officials lacked proper training and many stations received insufficient voting materials, including ballots. Voters reported problems finding the correct polling stations as none had been identified ahead of time. Privacy of votes was absent at almost all polling stations, with party agents and others (possibly, security services) hovering over voters. At one station in old Kano city, party agents kept a list of voters' names and who they voted for. At one polling station in Katsina, observers witnessed party agents bribing voters in line. Underage voting was observed in Kano, Katsina and Sokoto states. As well, observers noted extremely low turnout of women, except in Sokoto state. Voter turnout

ABUJA 00000746 002.2 OF 005

across the zone varied, with areas of Kano city as low as 10 percent, Katsina estimated at 30 percent, Sokoto at 40 and Kaduna at as much as 35 percent.

¶6. (SBU) Sporadic violence was reported across all observed states of the North West, with the exception of Sokoto and Kaduna. In northern Kaduna, there were reports of ballot boxes being carried off. Mission observers witnessed police transporting electoral materials and ballot boxes. At one station, observers were told that ballot boxes had been stolen earlier in the day by "gangs of PDP youth." There were reports from Katsina that the houses of PDP elders were burned for allegedly trying to perpetuate irregularities. At one polling station in old Kano city, observers were caught in a riot when hundreds of angry youth carrying machetes and sticks stormed the station. In Katsina city, observers abruptly left a polling station as throngs of youths armed with sticks ran towards the station, presumably in an attempt to steal the ballot box. SSS agents approached and harassed Mission personnel at polling stations in Kano. In contrast to other areas of the North West, elections in Sokoto appeared calm and orderly. No elections-related violence was reported nor any attempts at ballot box stuffing or theft.

¶7. (SBU) INEC announced PDP victory in Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Jigawa states and an ANPP victory in Kano and Zamfara. Sporadic violence has been reported in Katsina, Kano and, to a lesser extent, Kaduna states.

North East Zone

¶8. (SBU) The Mission fielded observers in Bauchi and Gombe states. Polls opened in most areas by 1000, with city centers opening earlier than outlying villages as materials arrived faster. Mission employees observed varying degrees of disorganization at polling stations, but overall noted the

efforts of INEC polling officials to overcome problems with voter lists and lack of materials. In one local government area, polling stations did not receive fingerprint stamp pads (fingerprints were used to mark ballots); instead, officials used a marker to ink the voters' fingers. The lack of a standardized, alphabetized voter list caused considerable delays at some polling stations (up to 25 minutes to process each voter), although others received alphabetized lists and this cut the time to 3-4 minutes. Observers noted incidents of underage voting, ranging from up to 20 percent of the voters in line at one polling station to none at another. Observers reported a low turnout of women voters. There were varying degrees of voter privacy at polling stations, ranging from one police officer standing over the ballot box to a village that constructed their own thatch voting booth. Several observers were informed of allegations of multiple voting and Mission observers witnessed a ballot box tug-of-war between party agents over accusations of multiple voting at one polling station. Mission observers reported seeing pick-up trucks with machette-wielding young men in Alkaleri and domestic observers reported seeing similar groups of men carry off ballot boxes in Alkaleri, Ganji and Gombe. Media contacts reported security agents carried away as many as 40 ballot boxes in Alkaleri and Ganji.

¶9. (SBU) Some polling stations remained open past 1500 to allow voters in line to cast their ballots, while others which had opened late were closed when observers returned at 1400 (making it impossible to vote for all who desired to do so). Polling stations where Mission observers watched part or all of the count were peaceful, although there was considerable interest from non-accredited individuals. ANPP party agents in Bauchi city were well organized and communicated regularly between polling stations as the counting began. Mission and international observers reported an ANPP victory (with 2-3 times more votes than PDP) where they observed the count, which corresponds to the margin reported by domestic observers. Despite an observed determination on the part of the voters, often standing in line for hours to cast their vote, turnout at observed stations was generally only 30-40 percent of the registered

ABUJA 00000746 003.2 OF 005

voters.

¶10. (SBU) INEC announced PDP victory in Gombe, Adamawa, and Taraba states. ANPP won in Bauchi, Yobe and Borno states. Street violence erupted near collation centers and INEC offices in Bauchi on Sunday as ANPP supporters suspected delays in announcing the results meant PDP tampering. Sporadic violence has been reported in Adamawa, Taraba and Gombe states since the results were announce.

South East Zone

¶11. (SBU) Mission observers visited polling stations in Enugu and Anambra states. Most, but not all, polling stations in Enugu had voters lists posted; no voters lists were posted in Anambra. Voting, when it occurred, began late: after 1100 in Awka and not at all in other areas of Anambra and after 1530 in Enugu city. Election materials were not distributed until after mid-day in Enugu due to opposition protests which stemmed from the absence of vote tally sheets (ref B). Poll closing time was officially extended until 1800 in Enugu; however, most polling stations never opened, and of the few that did many in Enugu town opened as late as 1700. Many potential voters were turned away because they were not on the voter list, although they possessed a voters card for that polling station. As a result, Mission observers noted that no more than 40 ballots had been cast at any of the polling stations we observed. Lack of materials was a significant problem in all areas of Anambra and Enugu. Most stations were supplied with only 100 ballots, while having any where from 200 to 1,000 registered voters. Despite recent court cases ordering his inclusion, Anambra state

ballots omitted the name of AC gubernatorial candidate Chris Ngige. There was a pervasive problem of lack of privacy, with Mission observers only finding one polling station where votes were not cast directly in front of polling officials and party agents. Domestic observer groups in Imo, Abia and Ebonyi states reported similar problems to those observed in Enugu and Anambra.

¶12. (SBU) Due to the late start of voting and growing tension in Enugu, no vote counts were observed by Mission observers in the Southeast region. All the polling stations we observed in Anambra were missing vote tally sheets and it was unclear how the vote count would be recorded at the end of the day. Gunshots were heard on the streets of Enugu by dark and Mission observers were unable to watch vote counts for security reasons. Mission drivers who went out at 1830 to refuel witnessed carloads of armed men driving through town and discharging weapons in the air. Police reportedly observed the shooting and did nothing.

¶13. (SBU) INEC has announced PDP victories in Ebonyi and Anambra states and PPA victory in Abia. Gubernatorial elections in Imo have been annulled due to violence and will be rescheduled for April 28; however, results of the State Assembly elections will stand. In Enugu, gubernatorial results will not be announced until rescheduled elections are held on April 26 in four of the seventeen local government areas. Sporadic violence has been reported in Ebonyi, Abia, Enugu and Imo states. Serious sporadic violence has been reported in Anambra state.

South South Zone

¶14. (SBU) Violence plagued the South South zone and elections did not occur in many places. Most international elections observers avoided the Niger Delta States of Rivers, Delta, Bayelsa, and Akwa Ibom because of on-going violence; Mission observed elections in Edo state only. There, INEC's preparation was poor and Mission observers watched the distribution of election materials in one area of Benin City. Materials were distributed on an ad-hoc basis, with no regard to the number of registered voters for each polling station. As a result, many stations had insufficient materials and some never received voting materials. Mission observers saw significant numbers of under-aged voters. They

ABUJA 00000746 004.2 OF 005

witnessed armed militants invading polling stations, intimidating election officials, and snatching ballot boxes in Edo. In Benin City an NDI observer team was present when a half dozen men armed with machine guns entered a polling station, fired shots and snatched a ballot box. At least one bystander was wounded. Overall, media reports more than a dozen people dead in electoral violence in Edo state.

¶15. (SBU) NGO and international media sources indicate that polls never opened in more than 80 percent of the locations in Cross River, Akwa Ibom, Rivers, Bayelsa and Delta states. Vote counts were a source of numerous complaints across the South South. In most cases, results were not announced at the functioning polling locations. In many cases results reported to collation centers were inconsistent with those witnessed by party agents and observers at polling stations. There were cases of vote tallies submitted for areas where no elections were conducted because of a lack of materials -- with some areas alleging as much as 90 percent turnout. As well, there were allegations of stuffed ballot boxes. Mission observers were told by an INEC supervisor in Ekpohma that more than 2,600 voters had voted in 4 hours, more than quadruple rate observed elsewhere in the state -- increasing the suspicion of an attempt to cover up ballot stuffing and account for the extra votes. Perceptions of unfairness and tampering led to protests at the INEC headquarters in Edo and Delta states on April 15 and 16 before results were announced. Protests turned to riots after results were

released in Benin City and a 0600 to 1800 curfew was imposed.

¶16. (SBU) INEC announced PDP victory in all six South South states. Serious sporadic violence has been reported in Rivers, Bayelsa, Delta and Edo states.

South-West Zone

¶17. (SBU) Voting in the South West started in most areas by approximately 1100. Some areas reported insufficient ballots for the number of registered voters. Areas of Lagos reported varying degrees of organization, with some polling stations operating fairly efficiently while others report party agents had to answer questions from the INEC staff on proper procedure. One polling station in Lagos apparently received the wrong voters list and turned all voters away (as their names did not appear on the list). Voting privacy was an issue at most stations visited in the zone. At a few polling stations, party agents were calling out the names of voters on a bullhorn to "inform" the voter that they can vote. Mission observers in Uselu area of Lagos saw a group of 20 youths running through a polling station. Police later told the observers the youths had been intimidating voters. By mid afternoon, reports were coming in to police stations in Lagos, Lyanpaja and Agege that unknown thugs had seized polling stations and taken ballot boxes. RSO office contacts report that an army task force was keeping most people from voting in Ajah area of Lagos. As well, Mission observers reported sporadic unrest as voters became frustrated by the long wait time and a lack of materials at some stations.

¶18. (SBU) Observers in the Festac Town area of Lagos visited an INEC office at 1415 where they observed numerous stacks of ballots being handled in the office. The observers were told the ballots had been returned to INEC because a local PDP candidate for State Assembly had been left off the ballot. The INEC official told them he had referred the problem to higher levels of INEC and was awaiting instructions. Once counting began, there were reports of youth gangs ("area boys") in a standoff with military at one collation station. (Note: Military officials told observers they were under orders to leave the polling station at 1800.) Mission observers reported fewer than 20 percent of votes tallied in at least four locations in Lagos.

¶19. (SBU) INEC announced PDP victory in Ekiti, Osun, Ondo, Ogun, and Oyo states. AC won Lagos state. Serious sporadic violence has been reported in Osun, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo and Ekiti states.

ABUJA 00000746 005.2 OF 005

¶20. (U) This is a joint Embassy/Consulate cable.
CAMPBELL